

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Canceled).

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~The exposure control apparatus according to claim 1,~~

An exposure control apparatus configured to determine an exposure value based on a luminance of a photographic screen and to perform exposure control based on a determined exposure value, said exposure control apparatus comprising:

an area generating unit configured to divide the photographic screen into a predetermined number of areas;

a deciding unit configured to decide, for each area generated by said area generating unit, whether a main subject having a luminance higher than a predetermined luminance threshold exists within the areas;

an average luminance calculating unit configured to calculate an average luminance in an area generated by the area generating unit according to a decision result by said deciding unit; and

an exposure value determining unit configured to determine an exposure value based on the average luminance calculated by said average luminance calculating unit,

wherein said deciding unit counts pixels, each pixel having a luminance higher than the predetermined luminance threshold, out of pixels forming the area and decides whether the count value of high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined count threshold[[;]], and

said average luminance calculating unit calculates the average luminance by using luminance per se of the high luminance pixel when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value exceeds the predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average luminance calculating unit substitutes a predetermined low luminance smaller than

the predetermined luminance threshold for a luminance of the high luminance pixel so as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding unit decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a parameter table configured to store therein a plurality of parameter groups, each of which includes the predetermined luminance threshold, the predetermined count threshold and the predetermined low luminance,

wherein said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit select the parameter group according to an exposure condition.

Claim 4 (Original): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the parameter group per area generated by said area generating unit is stored in the parameter table, and said deciding unit and said average luminance calculating unit select the parameter group according to the area generated by said area generating unit.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said parameter table stores a plurality of low luminances in the parameter groups, and said average luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance according to the high luminance pixel count value.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said parameter table stores a plurality of low luminances in the parameter groups, and said average luminance calculating unit selects the low luminance according to the high luminance pixel count value.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said parameter table stores a plurality of count thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The exposure control apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said parameter table stores a plurality of count thresholds in the parameter groups, and said deciding unit selects the count value according to the exposure condition.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Canceled).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~The exposure control method according to claim 10,~~
An exposure control method that determines an exposure value based on the
luminance of a photographic screen and performs exposure control based on the determined
exposure value, said exposure control method comprising:

dividing the photographic screen into a predetermined number of areas;
deciding, for each area, whether a main subject having a luminance higher than a
predetermined luminance threshold exists within that area;
calculating an average luminance in each area according to a decision result of said
deciding; and
determining an exposure value based on the average luminance in the area calculated
in said calculating,

wherein said deciding counts pixels, each pixel having a luminance higher than the

predetermined luminance threshold, out of pixels forming the area and decides whether a count value of the high luminance pixels exceeds a predetermined count threshold[[;]], and

said calculating further calculates an average luminance by using luminance per se of a high luminance pixel when the deciding decides that a high luminance pixel count value exceeds a predetermined count threshold; in contrast, said average luminance calculating substitutes a predetermined low luminance smaller than the predetermined luminance threshold for the luminance of the high luminance pixel so as to calculate the average luminance when the deciding decides that the high luminance pixel count value is equal to or smaller than the predetermined count threshold.